



MOHS SURGERY POST-TREATMENT CARE: STITCHES

Wound Care Instructions

- A pressure dressing will be applied following surgery.
- **Keep the area completely dry for 48 hours (2 days) after surgery** to prevent bleeding and infection.
- After 48 hours, gently remove the original dressing (unless directed otherwise). You may now get the incision wet in the shower.
- Cleanse the area with soap and water and gently remove any crusting. Dry the site and then **use a clean Q-tip to apply a liberal layer of Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment**. Cover with a non-stick pad (cut to the size of the incision) and secure it in place with medical tape, tegaderm, OR use an appropriately sized Band-Aid. **Repeat cleansing, ointment, and bandaging DAILY until stitches are removed.**

Pain Management

- **Take two (2) 500 mg Extra-strength Tylenol (Acetaminophen) every 6 hours for pain.**
- It is recommended to take Tylenol immediately following surgery and continue taking it for the first 48 hours around the clock to stay ahead of pain (maximum 8 tablets per day).
- If Tylenol is not adequate pain control, you may alternate Tylenol with two (2) 200 mg ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) every 4 hours.

Expectations

- Expect swelling, bruising, redness, and pain around the incision, that peaks within 48 hours and gradually decreases thereafter. To reduce swelling, apply ice packs during the first 48 hours for 20 minutes at the top of each hour.
- If surgery was near your eye, above your eye (forehead), or near your lip, it is normal to develop a lot of swelling and bruising. The eye may swell shut with an extensive black eye.
- Sleeping with an extra pillow or more upright in a recliner during the first two nights is helpful.
- If your surgical site is on an extremity, keep it elevated when at rest.
- Do not bend over for the first few days or lift anything greater than 5lbs until stitches are removed.
- Do not exercise until stitches are removed or until cleared by your doctor.
- For stitches around the mouth, eat soft foods.



- If swelling, redness, and/or tenderness around the surgical site persists for more than a few days or increases after 48 hours, contact the office as this could represent an infection.
- There are normally two layers of stitches. The surface ones that you see **may** be removed, and the deep ones will dissolve over several months. Occasionally, your body may react to a deep stitch, causing a red pimple or a stitch to stick out along the incision (especially at the ends). This usually resolves spontaneously. If not, the deep stitch can be snipped out at the office.

Bleeding

- A moderate amount of bleeding on the bandage is normal. If your dressing becomes saturated with bright red blood, remove the dressing and apply firm, direct, uninterrupted pressure (no peeking) with a clean gauze or washcloth to the surgical site for 30 minutes.
- If bleeding does not stop, apply pressure for another 30 minutes.
- If bleeding does not stop after 60 minutes or a large, swollen, painful purple lump develops immediately after surgery, call the office during business hours.
- If after hours, call the physician below. If you cannot reach anyone, proceed to the nearest emergency room.

Antibiotics

- If antibiotics were prescribed, start them right away, take with food and plenty of water, and finish the entire prescription.
- Notify the office if you have any side effects (rash, diarrhea, nausea/ vomiting, dizziness).

Other Questions & Concerns

- During business hours, please contact the office at (513) 984-4800.
- For concerns or emergencies overnight, proceed to your local emergency room.
- For emergencies only, contact Dr. Chang, Mohs surgeon (413) 443-5838. If your concern is non-emergent, please contact the office.